

City urged to pass transgender bias law BY FRANK MAIN

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Thirty transgender people have been victims of discrimination and hate crimes in Chicago in the last two years, underscoring the need for the City Council to pass an ordinance to protect their civil rights, a report released Friday says.

U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) was among the political leaders at a news conference pressing for city, county and state human-rights laws to include transgender people. The New York City Council passed such an ordinance Wednesday. More than 40 other cities also have laws banning gender identity-based discrimination.

"I think New York gave us an example that we will quickly emulate in Chicago," said Clarence Wood, chairman of the Chicago Commission on Human Rights.

The commission plans to approach Chicago aldermen about amending the city's human-rights ordinance, Wood said. Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley (D-Chicago) said he intends to introduce similar legislation this year. And state Rep. Larry McKeon (D-Chicago), the General Assembly's only openly gay legislator, vowed the same.

"Many of my colleagues in Springfield still need to be educated," McKeon said.

Miranda Stevens-Miller, political director of It's Now Illinois, said that about 20 Chicago aldermen have expressed support for the amendment, which would seek protection from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, credit and housing.

Transgender people include transsexuals and cross-dressers.